

# **Environmental Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes**

**February 2, 2011**

## **Committee Members Present:**

Chair Patricia Bates, OCTA Board of Directors  
Vice-Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck, Measure M Support Groups  
Nancy Jimeno, California State University, Fullerton  
James Kelly, Measure M2 Taxpayers Oversight Committee  
David Mayer, CA Department of Fish and Game  
Adam Probolsky, Probolsky Research  
Sylvia Vega, Caltrans  
Dan Silver, Endangered Habitats League  
Jonathan Snyder, US Fish and Wildlife Services [attended closed session, but not public session]  
Erinn Wilson, CA Department of Fish and Game

## **Committee Members Absent:**

Veronica Chan, US Army Corps of Engineers  
Dave Means, California Wildlife Conservation Board  
Greg Winterbottom, OCTA Board of Directors

## **Orange County Transportation Authority Staff Present:**

Marissa Espino, Senior Community Relations Specialist  
Dan Phu, Project Development Section Manager  
Monte Ward, Measure M2 Consultant

## **Members of the Public**

Cindy Black, Banning Ranch Conservancy

### **1. Welcome**

Chair Patricia Bates welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:05 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. She announced that Marissa Espino was recently named OCTA Employee of the Year and congratulated her.

### **2. Approval of Jan. 5, 2011 Minutes**

Chair Patricia Bates asked if there were any additions or corrections to the November 3, 2010 Environmental Oversight Committee (EOC) meeting minutes. There were no additions or corrections. A motion was made by Melanie Schlotterbeck and seconded by Adam Probolsky to approve the Jan. 5, 2011 EOC meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Call for Candidate Acquisition Properties**

Dan Phu gave an update on the recently held Call for Candidate Acquisition Properties. He said a total of 36 applications were received. Approximately one-half of the applications were from property owners and the rest were from other people. Letters were sent on Jan. 26 to the owners of the properties submitted by others asking if they wanted to participate in the program. OCTA, the Wildlife Agencies, and Caltrans met and evaluated the owner submitted applications. Once the results from the letters sent on Jan. 26 are known, the other properties will be evaluated. By early March, the biological ranking for all the new applicant properties should be known.

Monte Ward observed there were a number of properties submitted which were less than five acres and this was used as a cutoff point previously and it will be a factor in the evaluations. Also, they are hopeful they will have the biological rankings done before the end of the month. Since the T2020 Committee will be meeting early in March, it may be necessary for the EOC to meet before the end of February to consider recommendations regarding the properties.

Dan Silver asked what this would mean in terms of spending the Board-authorized \$42 million for acquisition purposes. Dan Phu said there will be a discussion of this in Closed Session. Currently it is unknown if any of the new properties are ranked high enough in biological values to warrant being appraised but it is conceivable. Monte Ward said this is possible and more than likely with one or more of the new properties.

### **4. Restoration Proposals Update**

Dan Phu gave a brief update on the restoration proposals. The OCTA Board authorized \$5.462 million for the funding of six restoration projects. They are close to executing the grant restoration agreements for four of the six projects. These agreements will be executed before March and staff will work with the cities on the timing of the legal agreements. The key document in all the grant agreements is the restoration plan. Currently OCTA is concurrent with the Wildlife Agencies on the content of the plans with four of the six projects.

Dan Phu said the OCTA Board consolidated the funding for the first two rounds for property acquisitions, but did not do this for the restoration properties. Therefore the next Call for Restoration Projects will start in fiscal year 2011/12 and will be for approximately \$5 million. Staff will start gearing up in the spring of 2011 for the next Call for Projects.

Monte Ward said staff is learning a great deal from comments and feedback on the restoration plans and the agreements such as the need to tailor the restoration plans appropriately for the sites and capabilities of the applicants. He believed this will help in some degree in how the next call for projects is structured. It will allow OCTA to be clearer and more specific and anticipate and address some of the issues that have surfaced in the process.

**5. Public Comments**

Cindy Black, Banning Ranch Conservancy, said they are currently in negotiations with the owners of Banning Ranch to produce a willing seller letter and will keep the EOC updated on the progress of the letter. They are also pursuing additional funding from other sources. They look forward to working with the EOC to accomplish the acquisition of Banning Ranch.

Monte Ward said this is one of the properties submitted for acquisition not submitted by the owners but by a community group working with the property owner.

**6. Committee Member Reports**

There were no Committee Member Reports.

**7. Next Meeting – Wednesday March 9, 2011**

Chair Patricia Bates said the next scheduled meeting of the EOC will be March 9, 2011 at 3 p.m. but there may be a special meeting of the EOC before the March meeting, sometime toward the end of February.

**8. Closed Session**

The regular EOC Meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m. to go into closed session